COMIC SCENE

A COLLECTION OF COMICS TO CELEBRATE SCOTTISH COMIC BOOK DAY

THE BEST OF INDIE SCOTTISH SPECIAL

COMICSCENE PRESENTS...

THE BEST OF INDIE

SCOTTISH SPECIAL

WELCOME...

...To the Best of Indies Scottish Special. This is to tie in with the first Scottish Comic Book Day 2021 on Saturday 27th November.
Thanks to all the Scottish Creators who responded to the call this year. If this year is successful we may be back in 2022.
There is some more work in digital from Scottish Comic Creators. Join the ComicScene Comic Club from £3.99 for access to the digital library at comicscene.org

Edited and curated by: Tony Foster

Design: @FlopsComics

THE COMICS...

BRUIN
David Robertson

THE DOLL SITTER
Colin Maxwell

SPACE BANSHEE
Katie Cunningham. Danielle Webe and Bolt-01

RAIN
Paul Bristow and Norrie Miller

THE FAUN
David Cranna

BIG CAT
Paul Bristow and Julie Campbell

CAPTAIN SCOTLAND
Tom Fraser, Jose Rodriguez Mota and Valentina Mozzo

All these books can be picked up online at:

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COMIC SCENE

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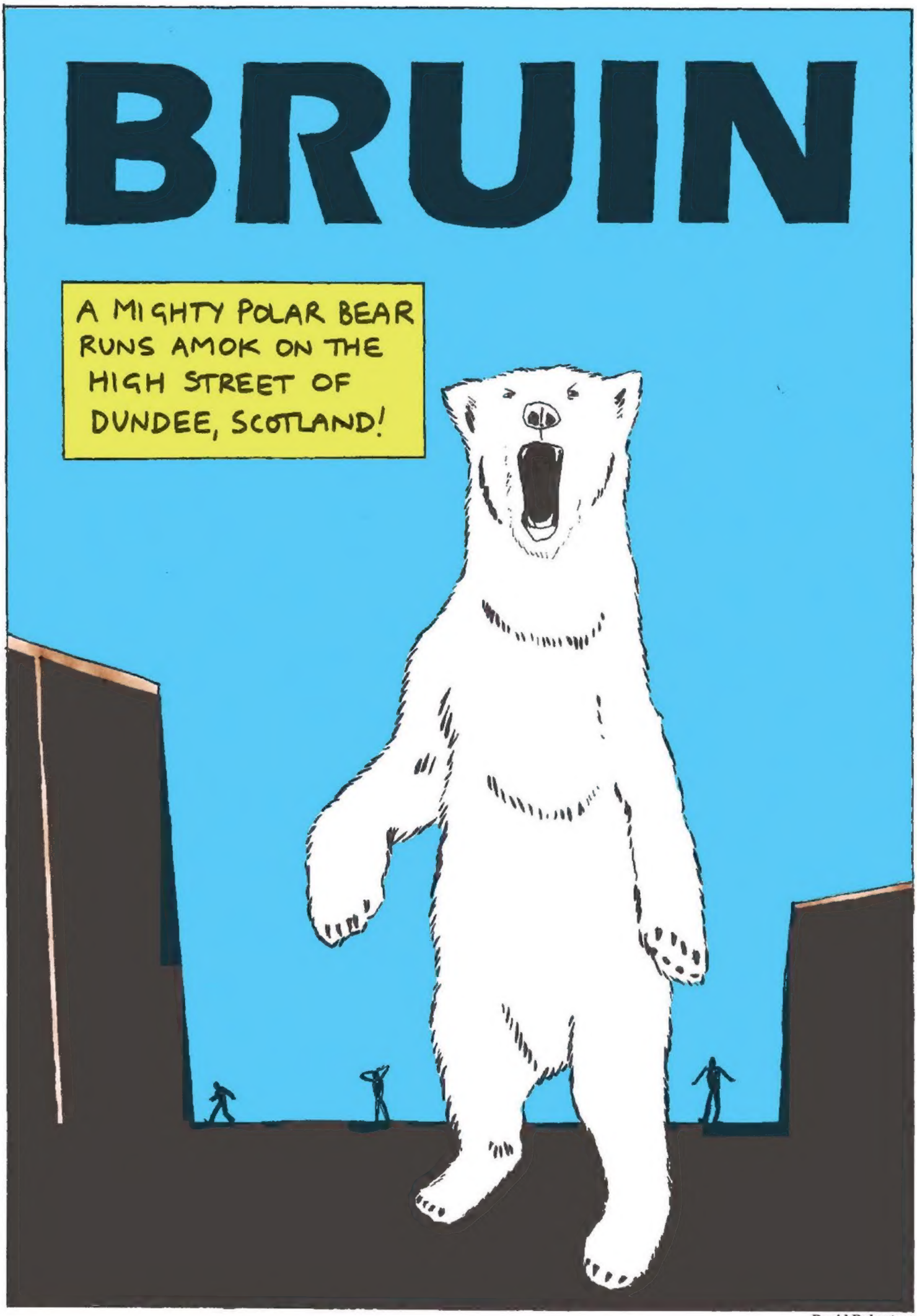
Featuring an archive of back issues

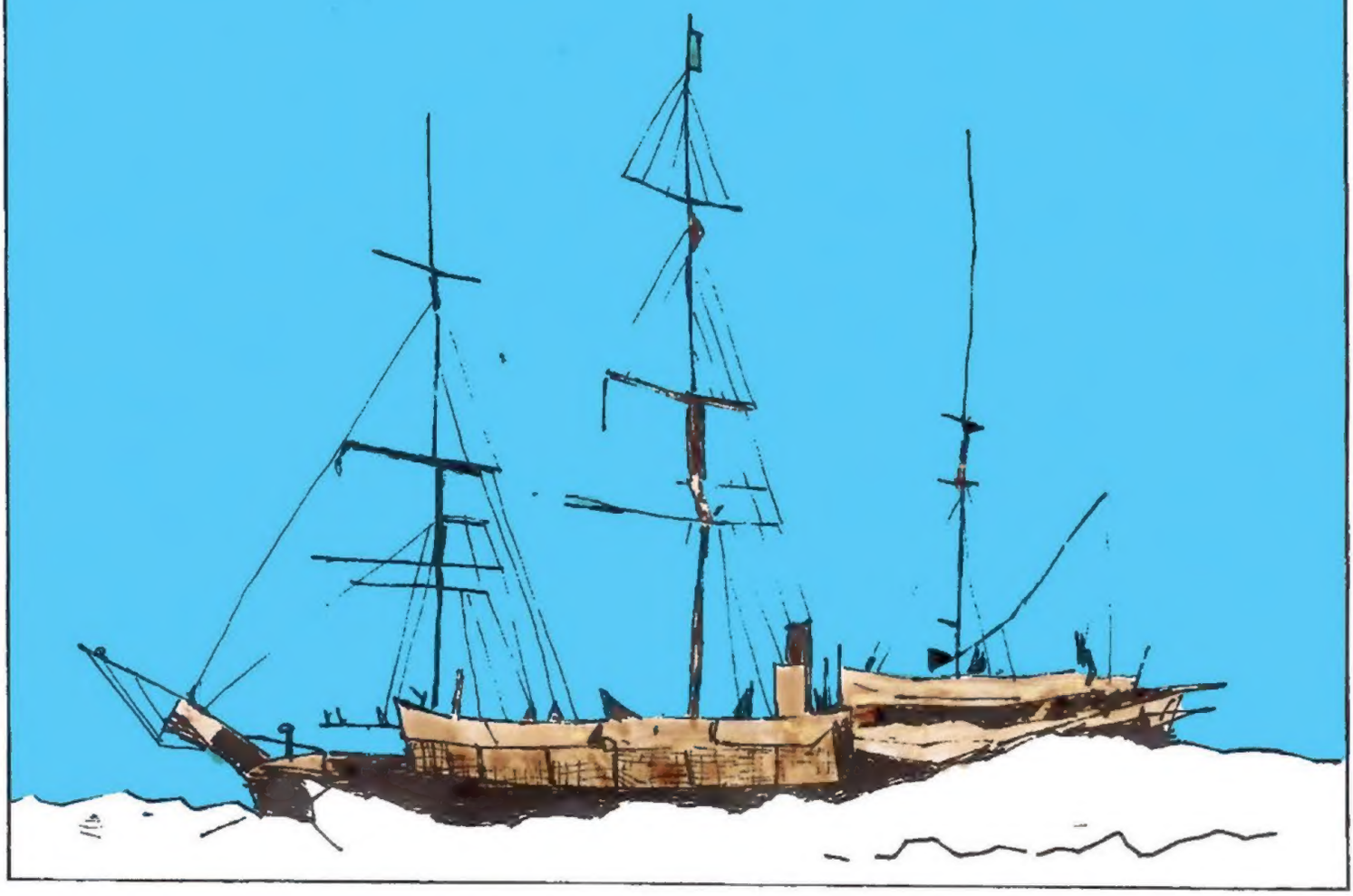
BRUIN



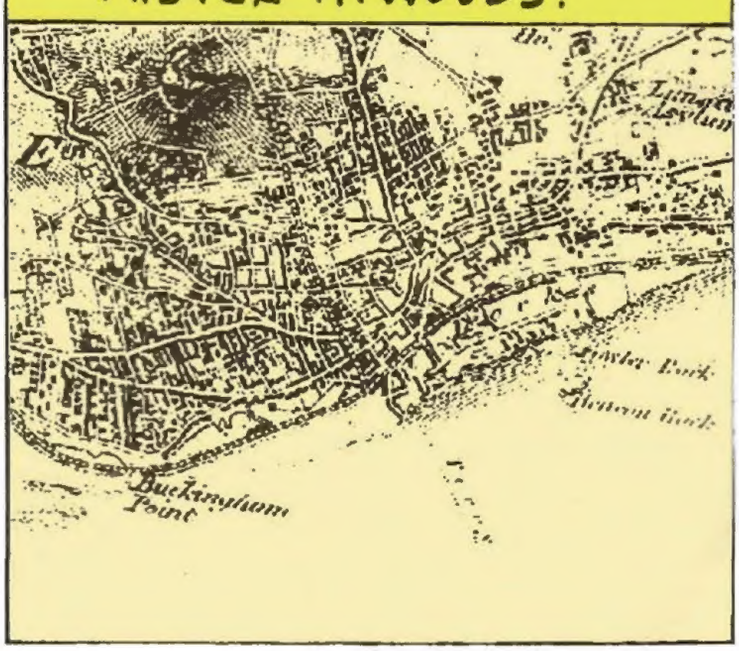
David Robertson

NEXT, WE WILL LOOK AT THE STATUES OF FICTIONAL CHARACTERS.
FIRST, FROM THE COMICS...
MINNIE THE MINX AND DESPERATE DAN...
ALSO, OOR WULLIE AND HIS BUCKET...
THE DRAGON IS A LOCAL MYTHICAL LEGEND...
THIS ONE IS REAL, WHEN A POLAR BEAR RAN RIOT IN DUNDEE.
... SAY WHAT...?

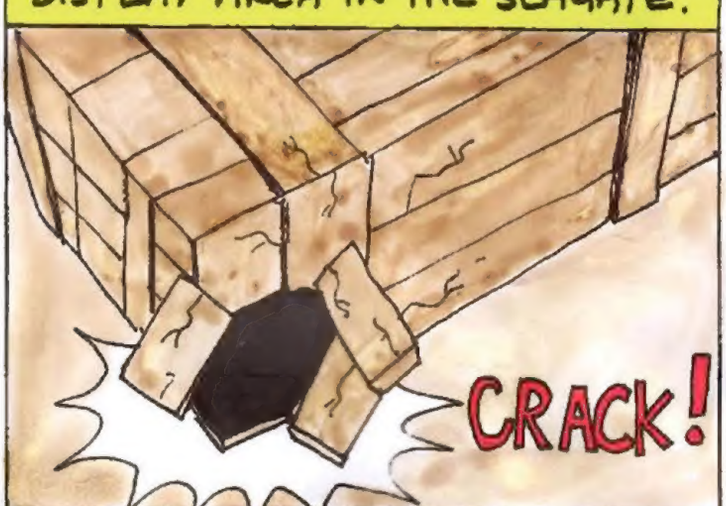
1878. ARCTIC WHALERS CAPTURE A POLAR BEAR.



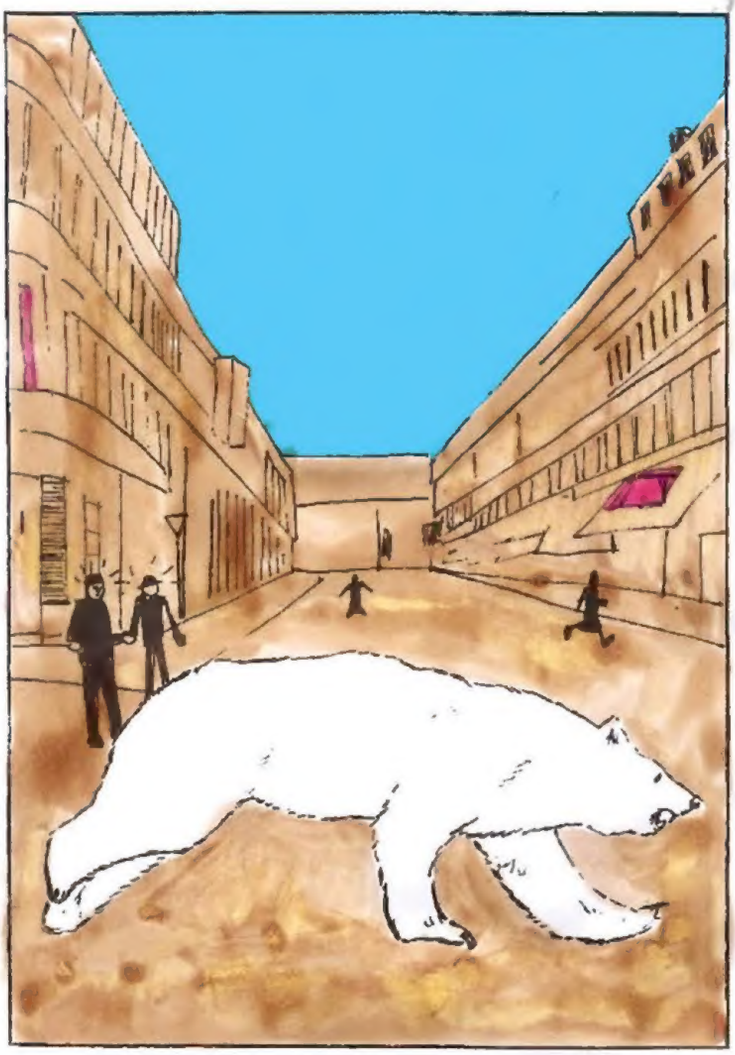
IT MADE ITS WAY TO DUNDEE, SCOTLAND TO AN EXHIBITION BY A MISTER A. WOODS.



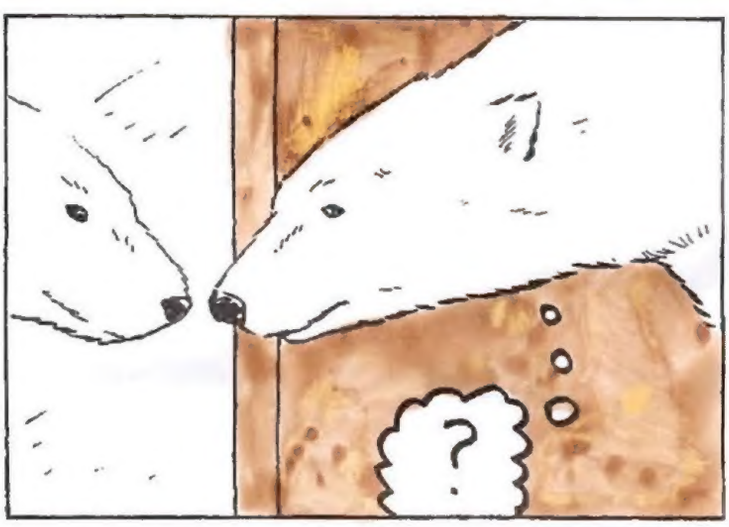
IN NOVEMBER, IT WAS BEING MOVED FROM A CELLAR IN THE NETHERGATE TO A DISPLAY AREA IN THE SEAGATE.

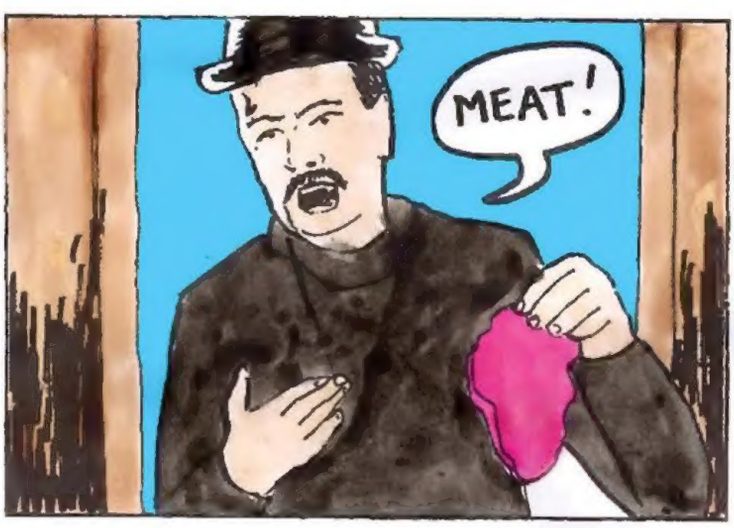


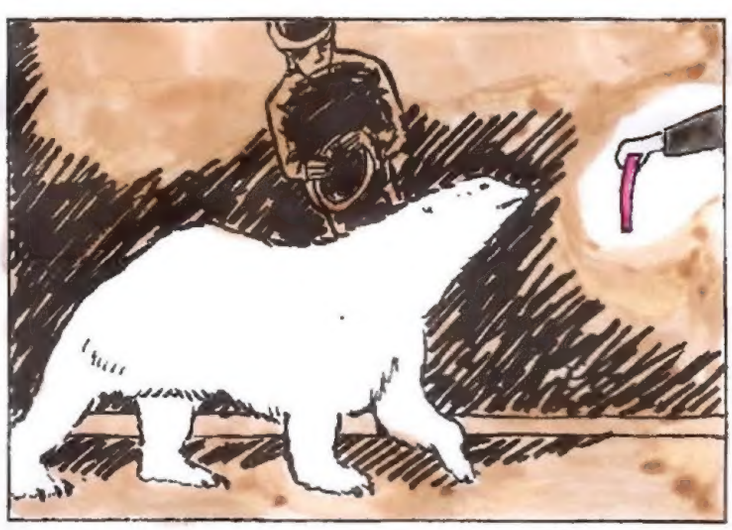
BUT THE CASE CARRYING IT DROPPED AND BROKE OPEN!

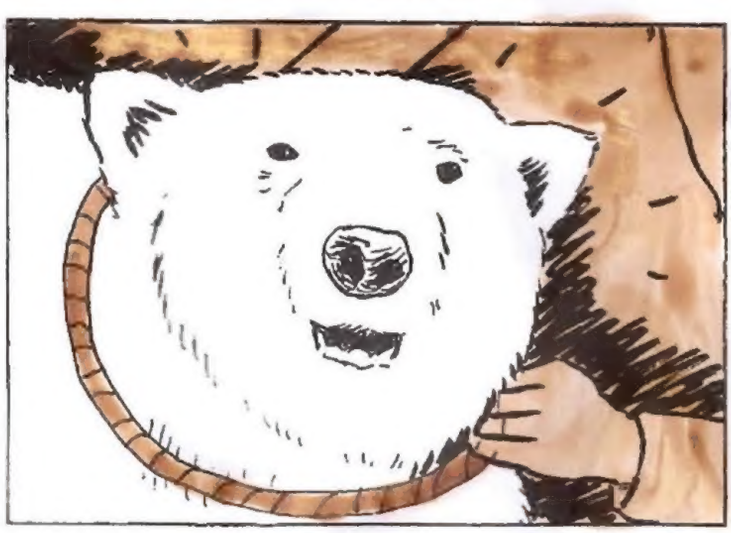


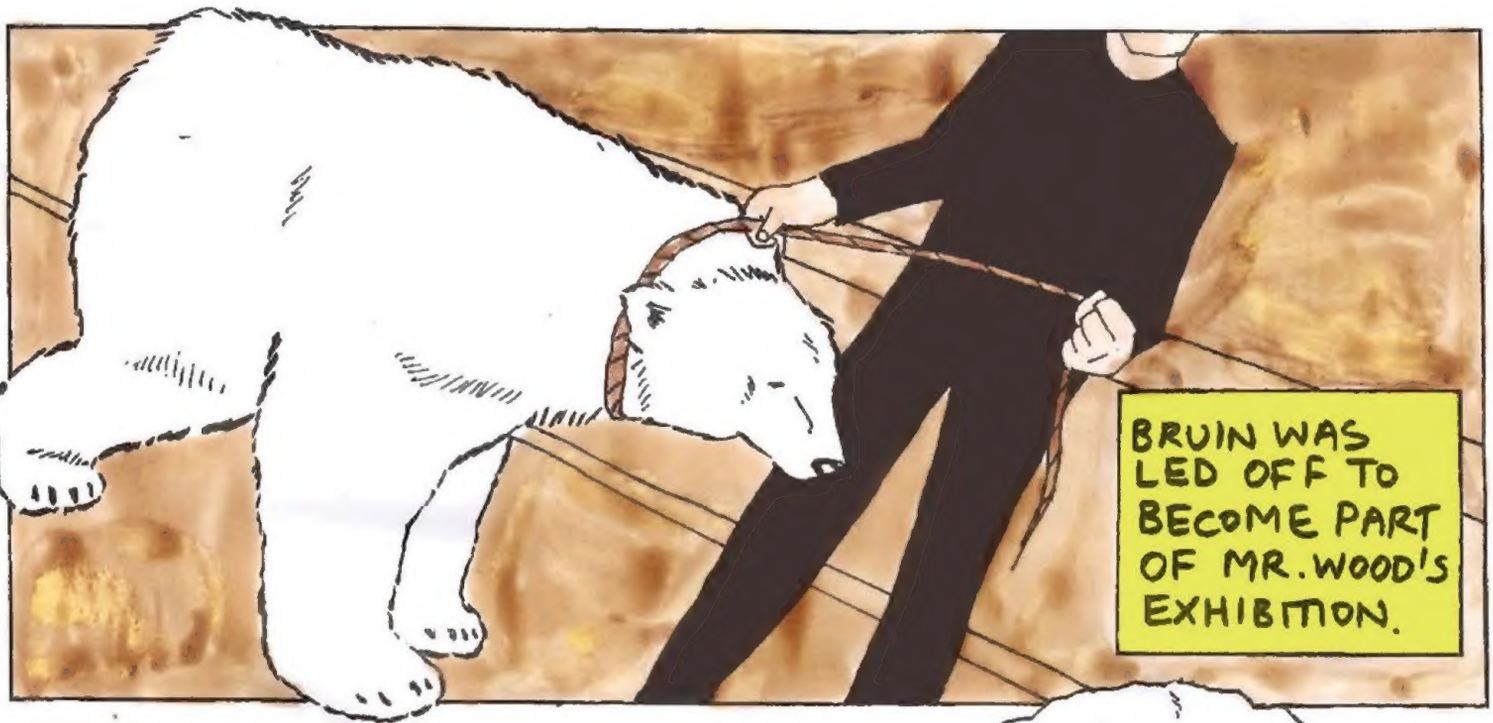
THE POLAR BEAR, NAMED BRUIN, ENTERED A CLOTHING STORE.
AN EVENT SHOWN IN THE ILLUSTRATED POLICE NEWS.
ESCAPE OF A POLAR BEAR AT DUNDEE.

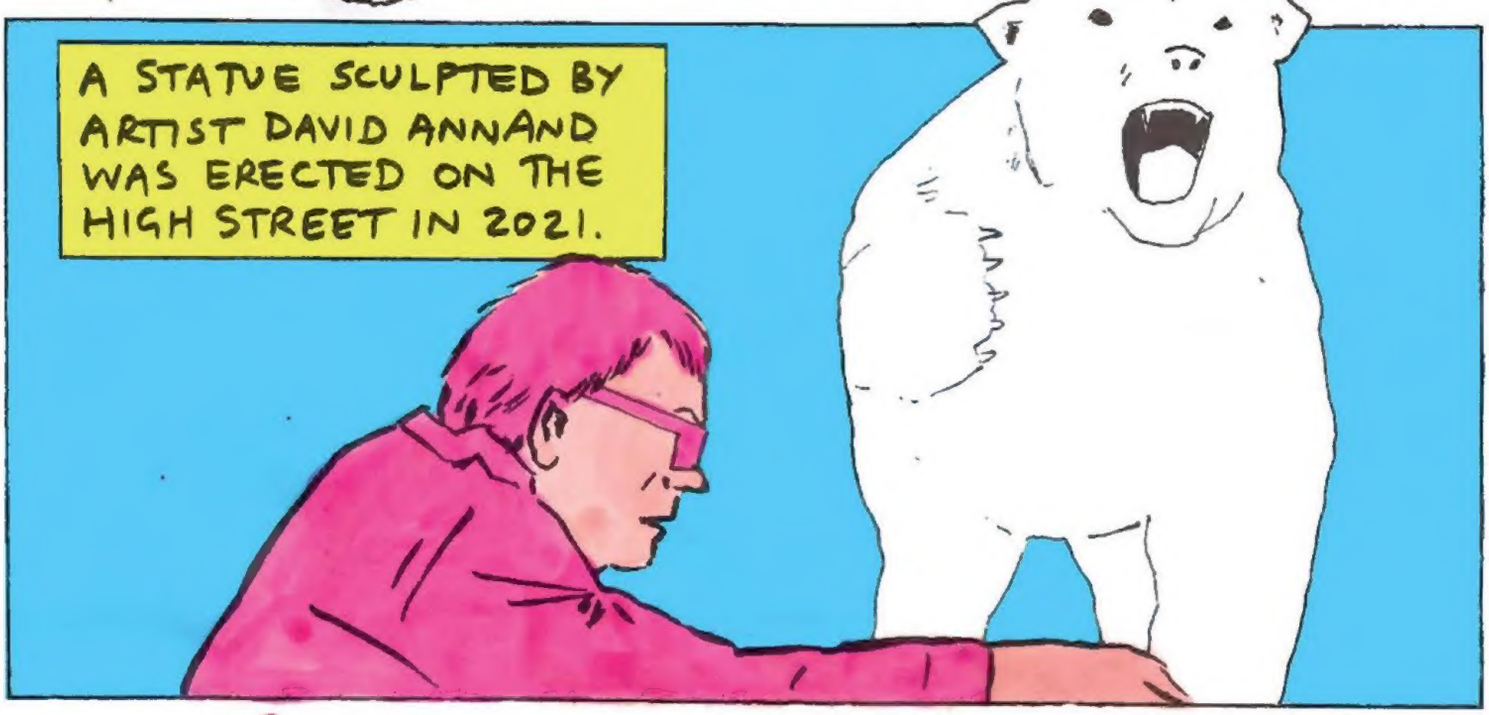

?


MEAT!

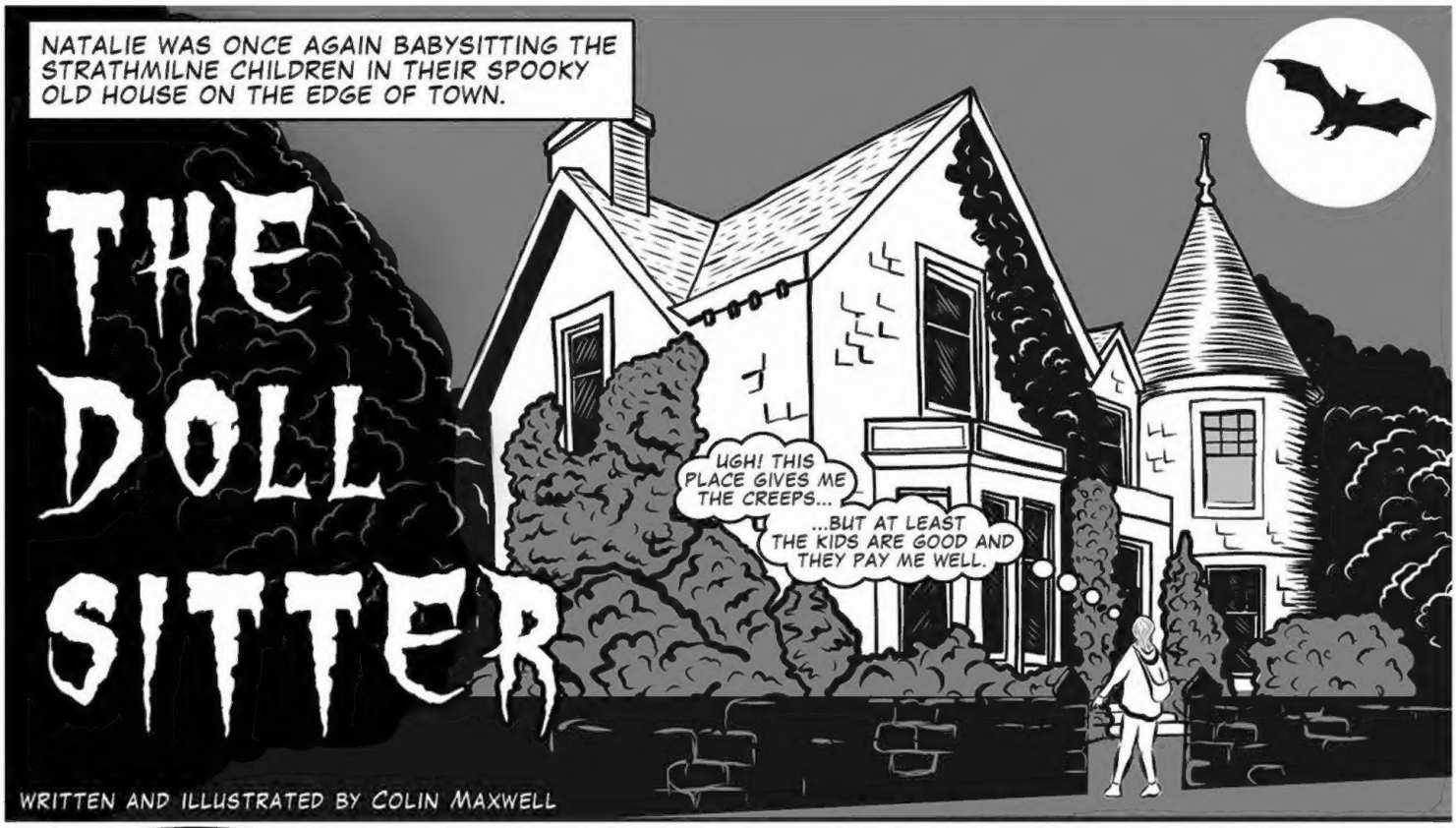








2015. I SAW POLAR BEAR LIVE IN LONDON. IT WAS GREAT. David


NATALIE WAS ONCE AGAIN BABYSITTING THE STRATHMILNE CHILDREN IN THEIR SPOOKY OLD HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF TOWN.
THE DOLL SITTER
UGH! THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS...
...BUT AT LEAST THE KIDS ARE GOOD AND THEY PAY ME WELL.
WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY COLIN MAXWELL

THANK YOU FOR COMING AT SUCH SHORT NOTICE. WE COMPLETELY FORGOT ABOUT THE DINNER TONIGHT.

EUGH! WHAT IS THAT!
OH, IT'S ALEC'S LATEST ANTIQUE DOLL. IT'S VERY VALUABLE SO WE'RE KEEPING IT IN HERE, AWAY FROM THE CHILDREN.

THAT'S THE KIDS SAFELY TUCKED IN BED, SO HOPEFULLY YOU'LL HAVE A QUIET NIGHT.
WE WON'T BE TOO LATE, BUT PLEASE CALL IF THERE'S ANY PROBLEMS.

BYE, BYE! HAVE A NICE TIME.
WHILE I'M STUCK IN THIS PLACE WITH THE CREEPY DOLL BECAUSE...

...IT'S THE ONLY ROOM WITH A DECENT WIFI SIGNAL.

Messages
20:21
Charli
Edit
Charli:
What u up 2?
Me:
Babysitting
Charli:
At the Strathmilne house? That place gives me the creeps
Me:
Me too
CUL8R

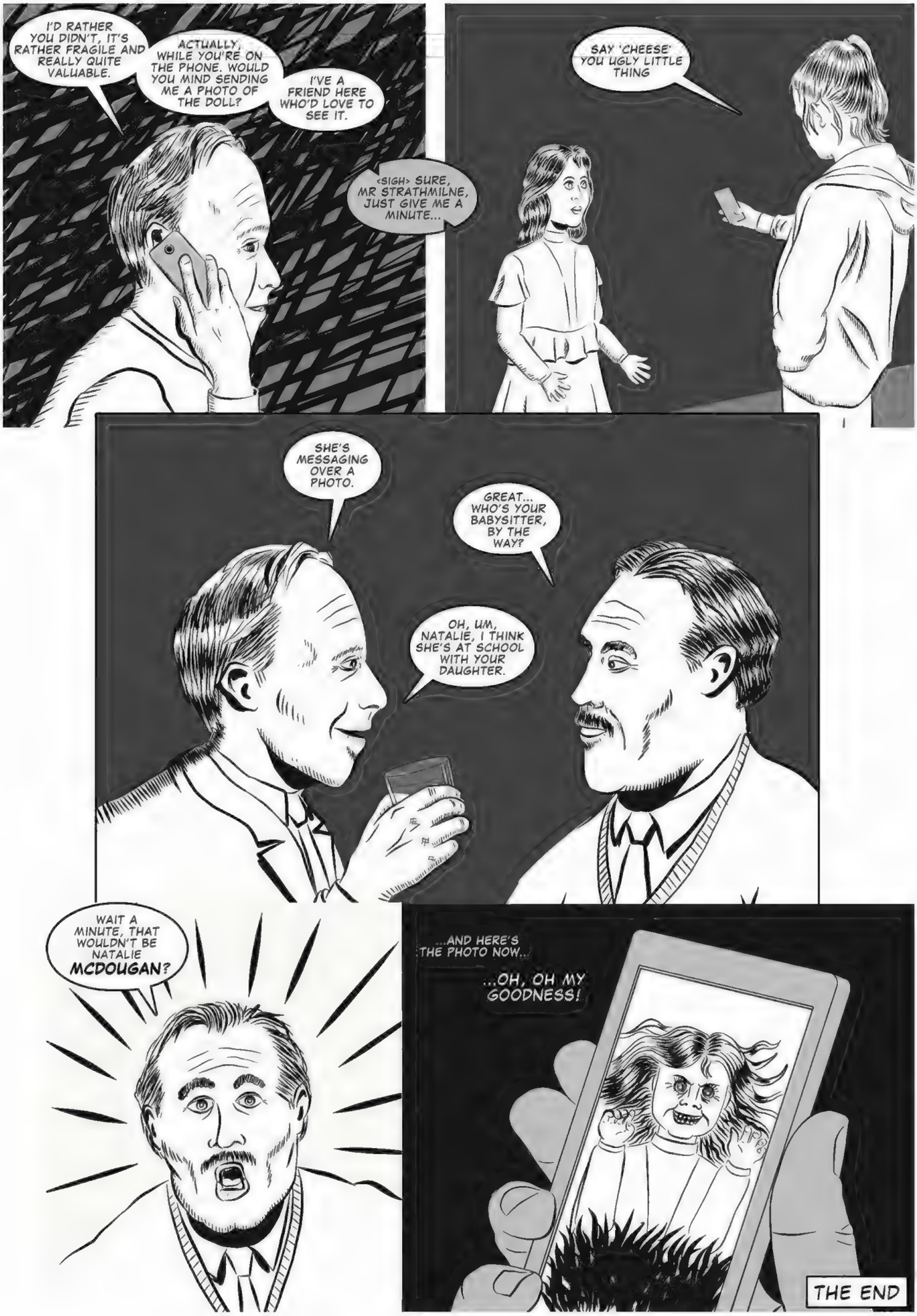
I'M SURE THAT THING IS LOOKING AT ME...
...I'VE AN IDEA...

RIGHT! LET'S GRAB THIS TABLECLOTH.

OH NO! NOW YOU JUST LOOK LIKE A GHOST!

I'LL PHONE MR STRATHMILNE AND SEE IF HE'LL LET ME MOVE IT.

MEANWHILE AT THE ANTIQUARIAN DINNER...
SO, YOU MANAGED TO BUY THE STRATHMILNE DOLL?
THE CLANSMAN
YES, BUT IT WASN'T CHEAP.
YOU DO KNOW THE STORY ABOUT THE DOLL, DON'T YOU?
IT WAS MADE FOR THE CLAN CHIEF CULLEN STRATHMILNE BACK IN THE JACOBITE TIMES.
HIS DAUGHTER WAS MURDERED BY A RIVAL FROM THE CLAN MCDOUGAN, SO THE CHIEF HAD THE DOLL MADE IN HER IMAGE SO HE COULD REMEMBER HER.
DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THERE WAS SOME KIND OF CURSE ON THE DOLL?
NOT QUITE. THEY SAY THAT THE DOLL IS POSSESSED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE DEAD GIRL, AND IT COMES ALIVE TO TAKE REVENGE ON MCDOUGAN KIN.
PROBABLY SOME STORY CONCOCTED TO KEEP THE SUPERSTITIOUS MCDOUGANS AWAY...
...JUST A SECOND, THAT'S MY BABYSITTER CALLING.
IS EVERYTHING OKAY?
THE KIDS ARE FINE, MR STRATHMILNE...
...IT'S JUST THAT YOUR DOLL IS KIND OF FREAKING ME OUT AND I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD MOVE IT?


I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T, IT'S RATHER FRAGILE AND REALLY QUITE VALUABLE.
ACTUALLY, WHILE YOU'RE ON THE PHONE. WOULD YOU MIND SENDING ME A PHOTO OF THE DOLL?
I'VE A FRIEND HERE WHO'D LOVE TO SEE IT.
<SIGH> SURE, MR STRATHMILNE, JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE...
SAY 'CHEESE' YOU UGLY LITTLE THING
SHE'S MESSAGING OVER A PHOTO.
GREAT... WHO'S YOUR BABYSITTER, BY THE WAY?
OH, UM, NATALIE, I THINK SHE'S AT SCHOOL WITH YOUR DAUGHTER.
WAIT A MINUTE, THAT WOULDN'T BE NATALIE MCDOUGAN?
...AND HERE'S THE PHOTO NOW...
...OH, OH MY GOODNESS!
THE END

COULION MINING ZONE 25P.
HEIM SYSTEM.
200 EMPLOYEES.
0 LIFE SIGNS.
SPACE BANSHEE EXORCIST
"Vacuum Seal"
SIOBHAN.
DRINK?
WRITER- KATIE CUNNINGHAM
ARTIST- DANIELLE WIEBE
LETTERS- BOLT-01

VACUUM SEALED FLASK? DIDN'T THINK YOU LIKED CHANGING WITH THE TIMES.
YER THE ONE WHO LOST THE ACCENT. AND THE WHISKEY'S FROM A GLASS GIANT. VERTICALLY GROWN BARLEY. SO IF YER AGAINST *MODERNISIN'*-
DON'T PUT WORDS IN MY MOUTH.
YOU GONNAE TELL ME WHY?
GOT TIRED. STUPID, I KNOW. ALL THE UNIVERSE TO RIDE THROUGH NOW. AND I GOT TIRED.
"I RODE ACROSS THE STARS. I WENT AS FAR AS THE FURTHEST HUMAN COLONY, THEN I CAME BACK AND FOUND THEY'D GONE EVEN FURTHER."
"BACK WHEN WE WERE EARTH BOUND, I'D WANTED TO CHARGE FARTHER, FASTER. SEE EVERYTHING."
"NOW I HAVE."
"THAT'S BULLSHITE."

YOU'VE SEEN EVERYTHIN' SO YOU JUST- JUST *STOP*? KNOWIN' IT'LL KILL PEOPLE?! YER NO A MONSTER, SIOBHAN.
DULLAHANS GET A TOUGH DEAL. IF YOU BANSHEES DON'T SCREAM YOU CAN PRETEND TO BE HUMAN. I COULD NEVER STOP RIDING WITHOUT KILLING THEM.
IT KILLED ME TOO, RIGHT?
IS THAT A GOLDEN KNIFE ON YOUR BELT, OR ARE YOU JUST HAPPY TO SEE ME?
I - SIOBHAN, YOU KEN AH HAD TO BRING SOMETHING. YE COULD'VE ATTACKED ME SOON AS SEEN ME.
I KNOW. AND WE'RE FRIENDS. SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE USED IT--
--NOT UNLESS I PROVOKED YOU.
I CAN DO THAT.
KRAK
JEYSUS-!
REALLY? YOU'RE STILL USING *THAT* OLD CURSE? YOU FOSSIL.

IS THAT HOW YOU'VE COPED ALL THIS TIME? BY JUST REFUSING TO CHANGE?
DON'T HIDE.
WE'RE BETTER THAN THAT.
YEAH...

NH-!
SLSH
DON'T PRETEND YOU DIDN'T KNOW IT WOULD COME TO THIS.
NO.

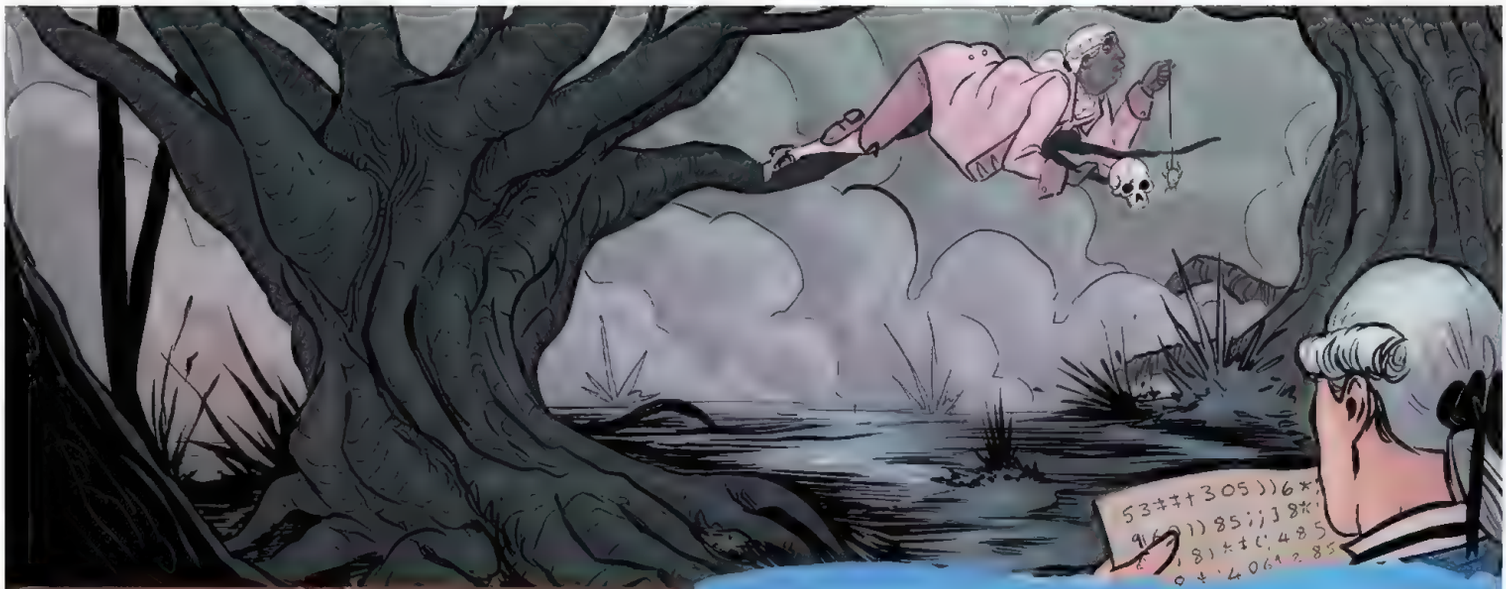
SHNK
SHHH, GIRL. IT'S ALL RIGHT.
IT'S OKAY. I'M HERE.
END

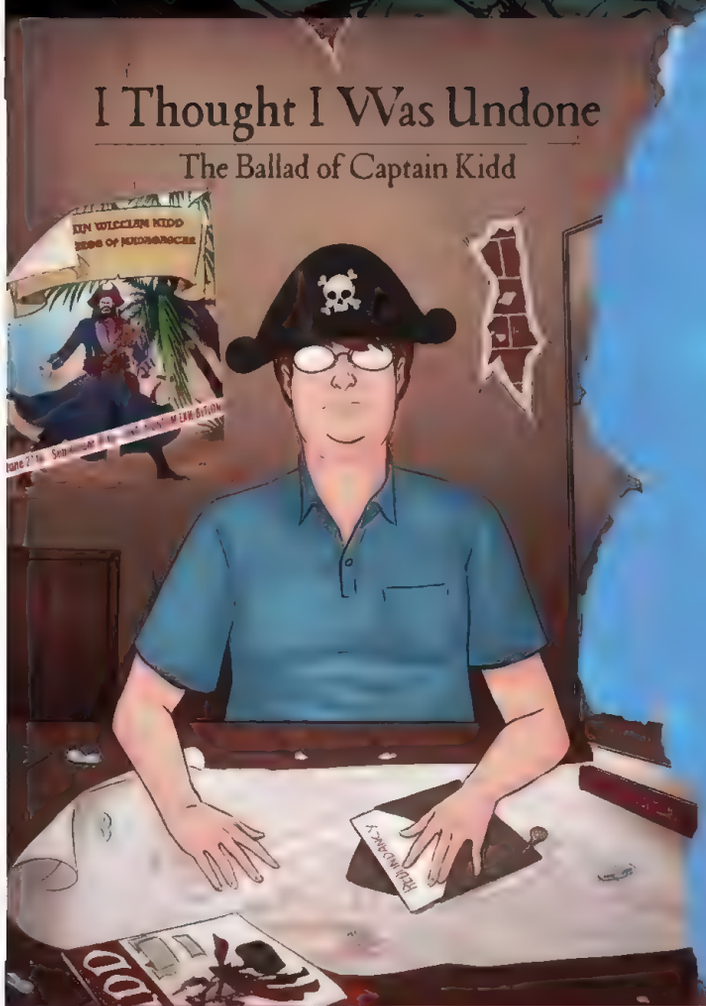
This
WAY

I am here!

OPERATION
RAINY
DAY
ELLA

AWESOME PLANS!
RAINY DAY RENEWABLES

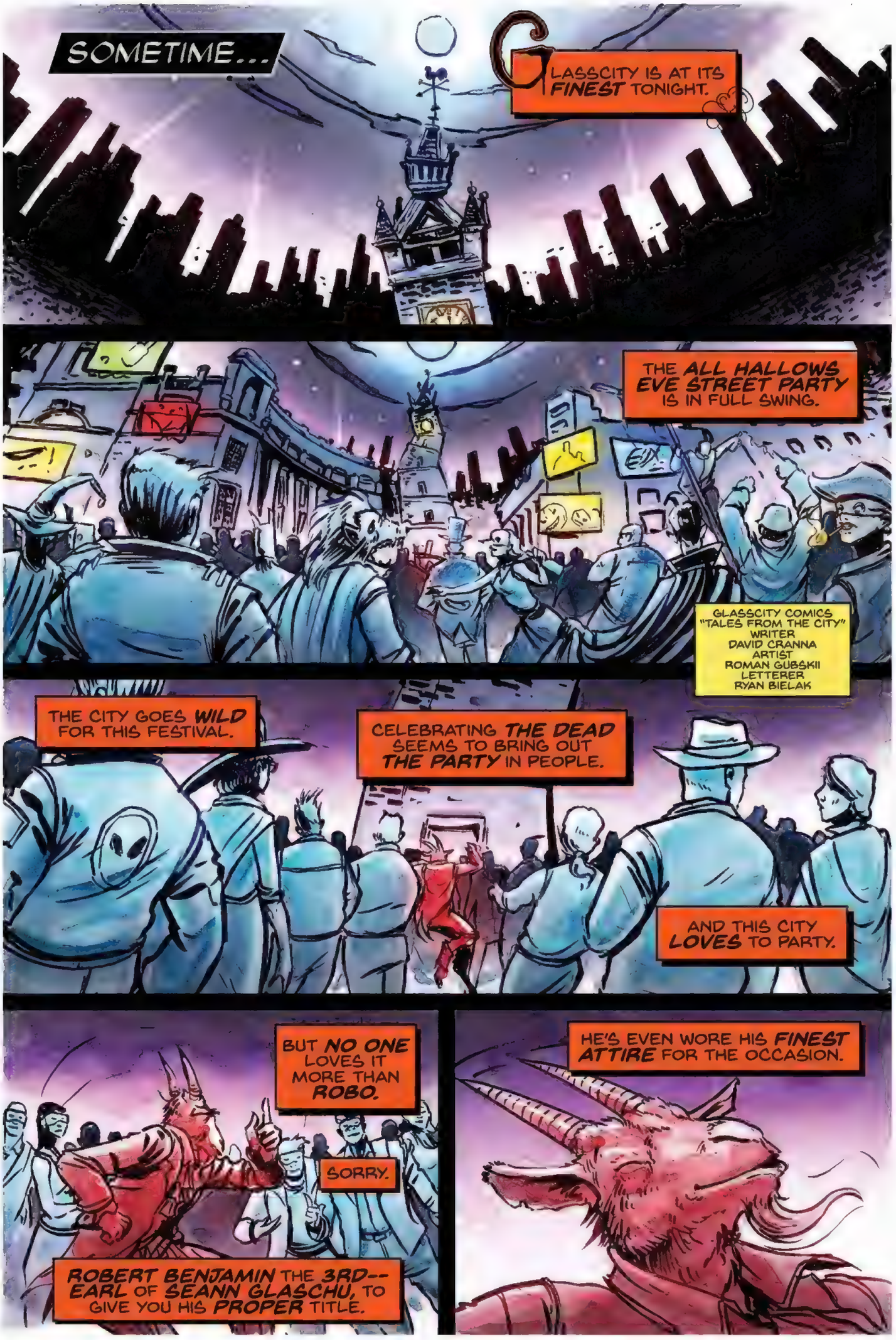




A graphic novel exploring the life and legend of doomed Scottish Pirate, Captain Kidd, featuring buried treasure, secret maps, sea shanties, courtroom drama, creatures from beyond and unreliable photocopiers.

Raising funds for Man On Inverclyde to assist their work supporting mental health in Inverclyde.

Available from www.magictorchcomics.co.uk

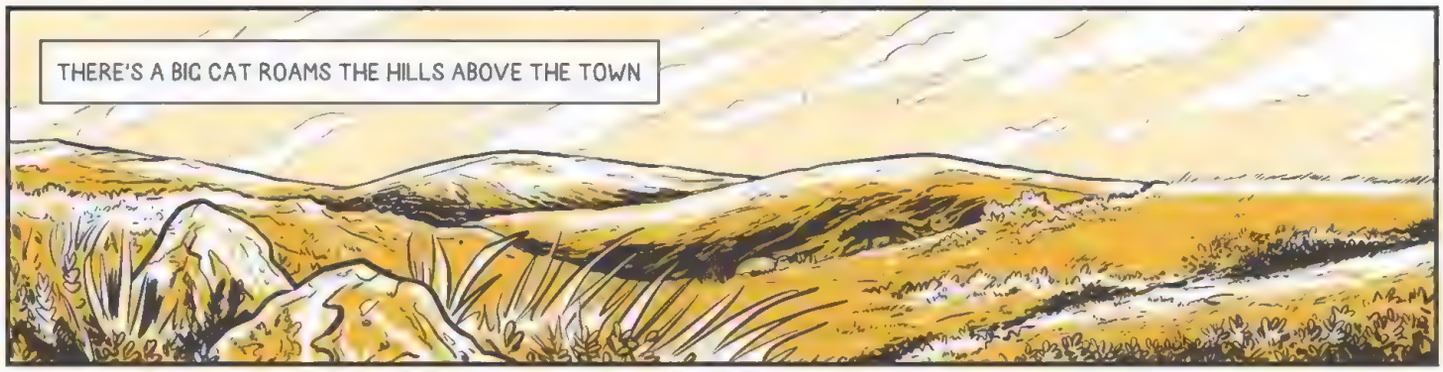

SOMETIME...
GLASSCITY IS AT ITS FINEST TONIGHT.
THE ALL HALLOWS EVE STREET PARTY IS IN FULL SWING.
GLASSCITY COMICS
"TALES FROM THE CITY"
WRITER
DAVID CRANNA
ARTIST
ROMAN GUBSKII
LETTERER
RYAN BIELAK
THE CITY GOES WILD FOR THIS FESTIVAL.
CELEBRATING THE DEAD SEEMS TO BRING OUT THE PARTY IN PEOPLE.
AND THIS CITY LOVES TO PARTY.
BUT NO ONE LOVES IT MORE THAN ROBO.
SORRY.
ROBERT BENJAMIN THE 3RD--EARL OF SEANN GLASCHU, TO GIVE YOU HIS PROPER TITLE.
HE'S EVEN WORE HIS FINEST ATTIRE FOR THE OCCASION.

IT'S THE ONE TIME OF THE YEAR THAT HE CAN TRULY BE HIMSELF.
WHEN HE CAN LET GO, MINGLE, OUT OF THE SHADOWS AND INTO THE LIGHT!
AND ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE SWEPT UP IN THE FRAY.
TO FLOAT MINDLESSLY ALONG IN THE BREEZE OF ORDINARY LIVES.
IT'S EASY TO BE ONE OF THEM TONIGHT.
TO BLEND IN TO THEIR SIMPLICITY IS NO TASK AT ALL FOR ROBO.
TO LIVE JUST LIKE THEY DO?
HE'S LIVED THAT LIFE PLENTY OF TIMES BEFORE.
AND ONCE AGAIN, THE LONG NIGHTS ARE BEGINNING TO DRAW IN.
XXX
BUT THE PARTY FOR ROBO HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN.

AND ROBO IS A PARTY ANIMAL.
OH, HE'S A WILD ONE ALL RIGHT.
AND JUST LIKE ALL WILD ANIMALS, HE ENJOYS THE HUNT!
BUT TO HAVE MASTERED IT LIKE ROBO HAS...
...TO HAVE THE HUNTED ENTERTAIN YOU.
TO HAVE THEM EXPLOIT THEIR WEAKNESS SO EASILY...

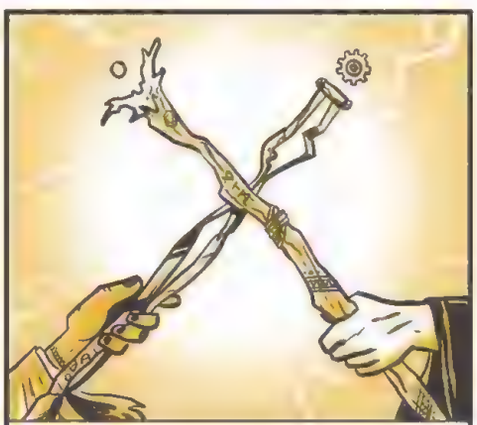
IT'S ALL SECOND NATURE TO HIM.
SURE, THE CIVILISED PART OF HIM IS SAYING GO HOME.
BUT THIS IS ALL HALLOWS EVE.
AND ROBO STILL HAS SOME PARTYING TO DO.
HE'S NOT QUITE FINISHED WITH THE ORDINARY PEOPLE JUST YET.
THE NIGHT IS STILL YOUNG AFTER ALL.
MAN, THAT IS SOME MASK!
IT'S NOT A MASK!
CRUNCH
AND JUST LIKE EVERY OTHER YEAR.

REVEALING HIS TRUE SELF IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF HIS NIGHT.
OH, HEY BABE.
YOU WANT TO GO AGAIN?
AAAAAAA
End



SOME SAY IT WAS ONCE
A WITCHES CAT

OR THAT IT ESCAPED
FROM AN OLD ZOO



OTHERS SAY IT WAS AN EVIL DEMON
OR SORCERER, TRAPPED IN THE FORM
OF A CAT DURING A MAGICAL BATTLE

ONE THING'S FOR SURE THOUGH, WHATEVER
IT WAS, THE SHEEP WERE TERRIFIED

CAPTAIN SCOTLAND

Back to the Future

The story so far: 1987. University student Scott Stewart developed powers and became the first national superhero, Captain Scotland. Amid romantic entanglements, animal testing demonstrations, Uni work, rising debts and campus bullying Scott went on a 'cosplay' night out with a close friend and was attacked. The origins of that attack came from a mysterious pyramid shaped object just above the Earth. Captain Scotland entered the pyramid **...and disappeared**.

30 years later...

6.30pm.

"Welcome to Reporting Scotland. I'm Jackie Bird. Tonight's main story - there was a dramatic change this morning on the Queensferry Crossing, just hours before it is due to close this evening for urgent road repairs. A bearded middle-aged man, wearing what looked like a cape, prevented traffic from moving freely over the bridge during the St Andrew's Day rush hour. Eyewitness reports suggest he appeared out of nowhere, looking disorientated and distressed. At one point it looked like he was going to fall over the edge of the bridge before Police Scotland detained him without harm. *No further details are known at this time.*"

ComicScene.org

Her pen flicks furiously, tapping annoyingly on the control desk in front of her. She suggests camera angles and close ups to colleagues around her. There's something familiar about that unshaven man in the news report. Something she remembers from her distant past.

9am, earlier that day...

I'm flying. At speed. Finally free. Around Edinburgh's folly. Leith, skipping on water like a smooth pebbled stone. There's a ship with 'Britannia' written on it and a portside I don't recognise. The sands of Portobello and North Berwick Beaches whip up a storm before I fly through the whale jaw of Berwick Law. City bound, muscles flexing. There are trams. Since when? Whoops, nudge that cyclist a bit forward so his back wheel doesn't get clipped by a car. Christmas is coming alive around the Scott Monument – I'm sure it's just November? Prevent a mugging, wallet back in safe hands for his kids Christmas gift.

I feel so alive.

Up the mound, the museum, around Edinburgh Castle, down towards the Grassmarket.

I drop off warm baked rolls to those sleeping rough in cold doorways and then a quick skateboard around Bristo Square by the Uni's McEwan Hall (thanks, kid, now get back to school!).

Faster. Forward. Bouncing between sports stadiums and golf courses. I provide a gust of wind so she gets her birdie on the fourth hole. Over the frozen Pentland Hills. Spinning around swirling land masses that point to Jupiter. I follow the arrow up as far as I can go then down, catapulting off the Five Sisters bings. I just miss the tip of Linlithgow Palace and head to Falkirk. Wow, almost hit two steel horses heads. They look amazing. Once around the Wallace Monument. Twice around Stirling Castle. Everything's changed. I've changed.

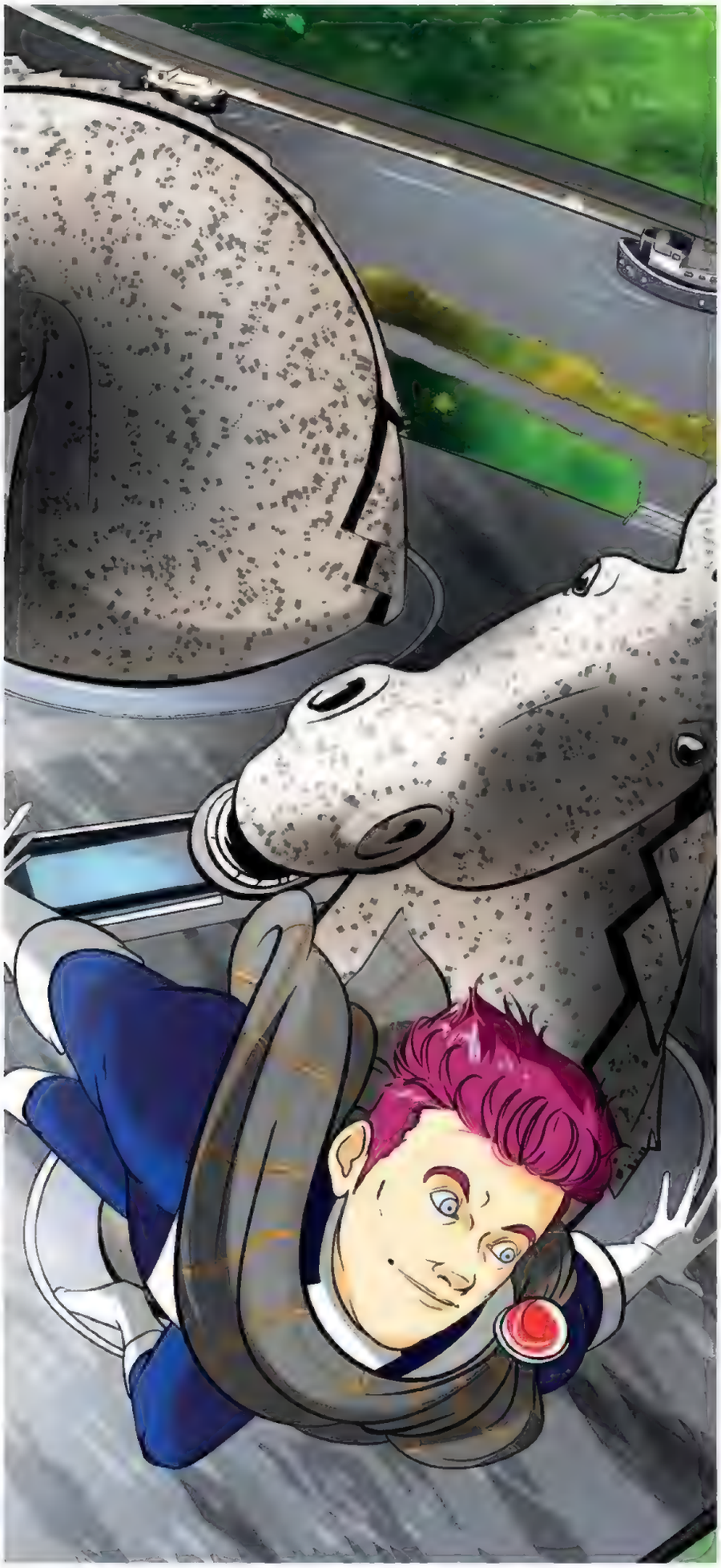
But there is one constant.

A sleeping volcanic beast that pulls me speeding back to Edinburgh city like a magnet. Via the comic shop I passed. No pockets. No sporran. No money. I'm so fast as they open up the shop doors for the day – they would just feel a wee draft. Steal a copy of 'Watchman'. No, not Watchman, 'Doomsday Clock'. Feel bad – note to self, don't steal comics again. A spin round Duddingston Loch, St. Margaret's Loch and then onto St Anthony's Chapel to clear the soul. To my final destination.

10.10am.

I watch him climb up to meet me at the top of Arthur's Seat, a rock formation from an extinct volcano in the centre of Edinburgh. I have always loved this place – the panoramic view of the city is wonderful.

I breathe in the air, feel the cold, crisp wind on my face. It feels like an eternity since I felt this good. I make myself look older, and the beard stays, as I listen to chattering voices down below.



I tune in and hear them speaking several different languages, but all celebrating Saint Andrews Day together. I suss that wee rascal Prince Harry is a little older and marrying someone called Meghan. Teenagers say 'You Tube' rather than 'ya choob'. Others use words like 'Brexit' 'and 'Piers Morgan', which I don't understand.

The man making his way up the hill is slightly slimmer than I remember. Certainly aged, each stride obviously starting to take its toll on the knees and hips. He keeps checking an object in his hand, as if it's showing him the way, reading glasses perched on the edge of his large nose. Everyone below keeps checking similar objects. Swiping and jabbing them with their fingers, ignoring the natural beauty around them. Some smile and point whatever it is at full arm's length towards the rising sun, then stick ears and dog noses on their captured image on 'Instagram' or 'Snapchat'. Is it a camera? Some look wired for sound but there is no chunky Walkman clipped to their waists as they run around the glorious Holyrood Park and Palace.
He gets to the top, his police uniform slightly crumpled and mud splashed on freshly cleaned shoes. He composes himself, breathing in before exhaling out and taking off his peaked hat. I'm sitting on a rock, comic book protecting my bottom from the cold, back against stone plinth. We nod in recognition of each other, a wry smile coming to my face.

"Hullo Scott," he says. His accent has more of a Scottish brogue than I remember.

"Hello Bruce," I reply, happy to see him.

"So, where've you been, the last thirty years?"

My name's Scott Stewart. I always dreamt of being a hero…a superhero. Ever since I picked up my first Superman comic when I was ten years old. I never imagined my dream would come true, but it did. Then my dream became a nightmare. Now I'm on top of Arthur's Seat, talking to my best friend from University. The last time I spoke to Bruce Addison we were still in our late teens, thirty years ago. He is asking a good question. I disappeared. Now I'm back. We both look fifty…and I still have purple hair!

10.30am

The beauty of a strong and long-lasting friendship is, no matter when you saw each other last, you continue from where you left off. As if nothing had happened in between time. Familiar and comfortable in each other's company. I need that from Bruce. We both do.

I was abducted by creatures in a pyramid shaped Unidentified Flying Object. The occupants didn't have a name. I gave them one. The 'Infinity Syndicate'. I tried to fight them off, but my powers were nullified inside the ship. During that time, I learnt very early on that they had given me these gifts, enhancing the power of the earth through me. I once dreamt I'd acquired my super strength by inventing a serum for impotency, which produced something else entirely when injected into the blood stream. Bruce reminded me that was the latent infantile thoughts of a teenage boy brought on by an overactive fascination with pretty girls, animal testing guilt and the Bobby Ewing shower scene in the 'Dallas' TV show! It didn't make it easier knowing the object of my affection, Shona MacDonald, had gone on to make her fortune as one of the scientists who discovered Viagra ten years later. Bruce hadn't seen her since, her fortune taking her out of his alumni circles, but did note to me he was on blood pressure tablets. A side effect of becoming Chief Constable of Police Scotland, from an early and less stressful career as part of the Police forensic team.

Of our friends, Madeline Shepherd had made a career in journalism, Cybill Hayes had been a stand up comedian but moved into politics, Sister Peroxide a school teacher, Spike Bunn a social worker and David Willis a Professor at Glasgow University. "David will be glad to see you," Bruce said, "You should give him a call soon." Most of our mutual friends had married and had kids, now all in their teens. I had been in my teens when I disappeared. I was nineteen, my whole life ahead of me.

Bruce had searched for me, when I went missing. All my friends and family assumed my debts had got the better of me. That I was too ashamed to face my wealthy parents, having rebelled against them and their Trossachs estate a few

years before matriculating at Edinburgh University. They are both still alive, but Bruce warned me my father was in a bit of bother because of his eye for the ladies and some inappropriate hugging.

Having not found my body everyone had been clinging on to the vain hope I'd gone abroad for the last thirty years! Rumours are my mother is intending to send father on a round the world trip to look for me one last time, rather than continually embarrass her around close friends. If I turn up on their doorstep after thirty years, chances are she will still send him anyway!

I'd been in a state of suspension all that time. Forced against my will into an odourless cocoon, being fed information about my abilities. My super strength. My ability to fly. The ability to morph my appearance to fit in with any surroundings. Even an ability to bend time! It did not surprise me when I was told by such powerful beings that others had been given super powers too. That we would all be preparing the way for 'Sanctuary', whatever that meant.

It didn't seem like a long time in the flying Pyramid. Just like a good night's sleep. Yet it also felt like an eternity. Then they just spit me out – I'd never felt so much pain. I arrived on a bridge I didn't recognise, looking over at two I did. The police arrested me but I easily broke the cuffs and flew away as soon as they let me out of their car at the entrance of the station headquarters. Bruce knew it was me instantly. He knew where I would go.

Arthur's Seat. A favourite weekend haunt of first year Pollock student residents, come wind, rain or shine. A jolly romp usually regretted when a little worse for wear or hung over. This is where Bruce and I went on a regular basis – it made you feel on top of the world!

I was dressed as 'Highlander' Connor MacLeod of the Clan MacLeod atop Arthur's Seat that May Day. The girls from Uni had come to wash their face in the morning dew, in the hope of maintaining their beauty. As was tradition I had 'acquired' a steel sword from our debating team visit to another university. I planned to wake the Dragon and take my seat as the true King Arthur (my middle name) with the sword, before claiming our ransom demand for its return.

It was stormy, stupid and the lighting flash that hit the hunk of metal I raised aloft as I shouted 'there can be only one' nearly killed me. I was saved only by the rubber DM's on the feet of my kilted legs.

My power's developed once I woke from the week-long coma. The lighting strike had little to do with acquiring my powers – it was just plain bad luck. I didn't know that at the time. I only told one person. The one person I trusted over all others. That person who was sitting with me now, tucking into a tuna and mayo sandwich. I truly loved Bruce, he was my Ramirez, and I knew I could rely on him to watch my back then and now.

11am

"What is that?" I asked Bruce, after I had exhausted our chat and come to the conclusion I didn't have all the answers behind my thirty-year incarceration. "Dynamic Earth. Built to celebrate the beginning of the 21st Century. You'd like it. Lots of rocks!"

"I can't believe I wasn't here for the 21st Century Hogmanay. Listen, what do they call 2000AD comic now? No, don't tell me,

it'll spoil the surprise. I want to know what that funny looking building next to Dynamic Earth is?"

"That is the Scottish Parliament. Currently a finishing school for reality TV stars. Bugs and baking more sexy than food banks and universal credit, it seems. You'll probably become a Z list celebrity too. Expect the call from Strictly Come Dancing soon enough! The parliament is where the Scottish Government is based. They gave us free prescriptions, free hospital parking, same-sex marriage, no upfront tuition fees, no smoking inside public places and increased taxes are likely. I can't even clip an annoying wean around the lugs without getting a custodial sentence."

"We have our own Government? You have to pay for your education? Are you sure I'm not on some alternative world?"

"This is real life Scott. There is still a Tory Prime Minister in charge of the UK Government, but it's not Thatcher. The Scottish National Party are in power in Scotland. And the sky didn't fall in when they took over from the Scottish Labour Party. The Scottish Tories are the second largest party. But you won't remember any different, having disappeared before something called the 'Poll Tax'. Some of those demos against that clever idea were quite scary!"

"Would it have frightened the wits out of my mum and dad?"

"Sorry, Scott. Probably best not to quote Rolf Harris. It's a long story."

It was true. I had a lot to catch up on. It was 'Scottish Book Week' and Bruce suggested I read about some magic kid called Harry Potter, but his favourite was Rebus. We were both disappointed Scotland hadn't made it to the World Cup (again!) but rugby was our game now! He refused to talk about America and Trumps Toilet Tweets as Bruce felt there was only so much new and unbelievable information I could take in one day. The world, it seemed, had gone mad and had not learned any lessons from history.

I couldn't comprehend we'd lost Diana, Freddie, Bowie, Jackson, Prince, Houston, George Michael and CompuServe. 'Doctor Who' had been axed at the BBC and brought back to Saturday night TV. There were some good and pretty bad new 'Star Wars' movies, my favourite Superman was dead and the Justice League were in the cinema. I'd missed Bruce's favourite TV shows 'X Files' and 'Twin Peaks' and their 'reboots' but would be able to 'binge watch' whenever I wanted. He recommended 'Outlander' and noted if I didn't catch up on 'Game of Thrones' I would be left out of several dinner table conversations!

A wave of nostalgia was in the air but it would all be new to me. Bruce told me I could 'google' it all. I looked at him confused – he offered me his 'mobile phone' to have a go. It was less chunky than I remember on 'Tomorrow's World'! I couldn't comprehend swishing my finger across a smudgy glass screen to get the information I needed. It all felt a little Star Trek. Being forced fed information in an airless cocoon seemed more natural to me. Bruce called that Facebook!

The Parting of the Ways

It was time to go.

More visitors were starting to walk up Arthur's Seat and Bruce reckoned it would only be a matter of time before my face would be shared with hundreds of others from the incident on the Queensferry Crossing in the morning.

Bruce couldn't be seen with me, and said the final report of the bridge incident would go away. He would make sure my costume would be known as a 'onesie' on the headline news in the evening, whatever a 'onesie' is. That would give me time to get myself together, clear my head, before a wave of 'selfie' requests when I finally came back to active duty. What is a selfie?

Bruce smiled and said it was good to have me back. It was time to shave off the beard and go and see my mum and dad – but I like the beard! The 21st Birthday Trust Fund I didn't cash in would come in handy for the work I had to do.

With a wave of his hat Bruce started the stumble down the hill, along a path smoother than I remembered. He had my comic in his back pocket. What kind of person steals a comic?

"Y'know Bruce," I shouted after him, "the beard is just for show."

I had just made myself look older so it wouldn't freak my friends out if I met them. I had been in suspended animation, a place where time stood still. I had not aged at all in thirty years.

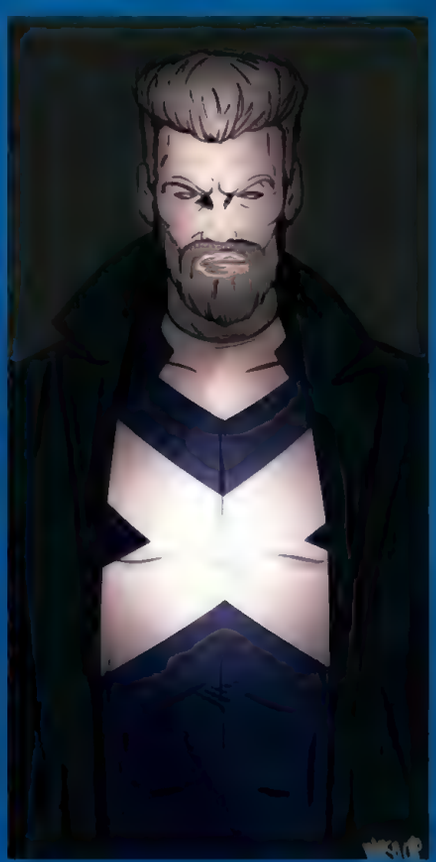
"I'm still the 19-year-old Scott Stewart at heart. I'm still the Captain Scotland you remember."

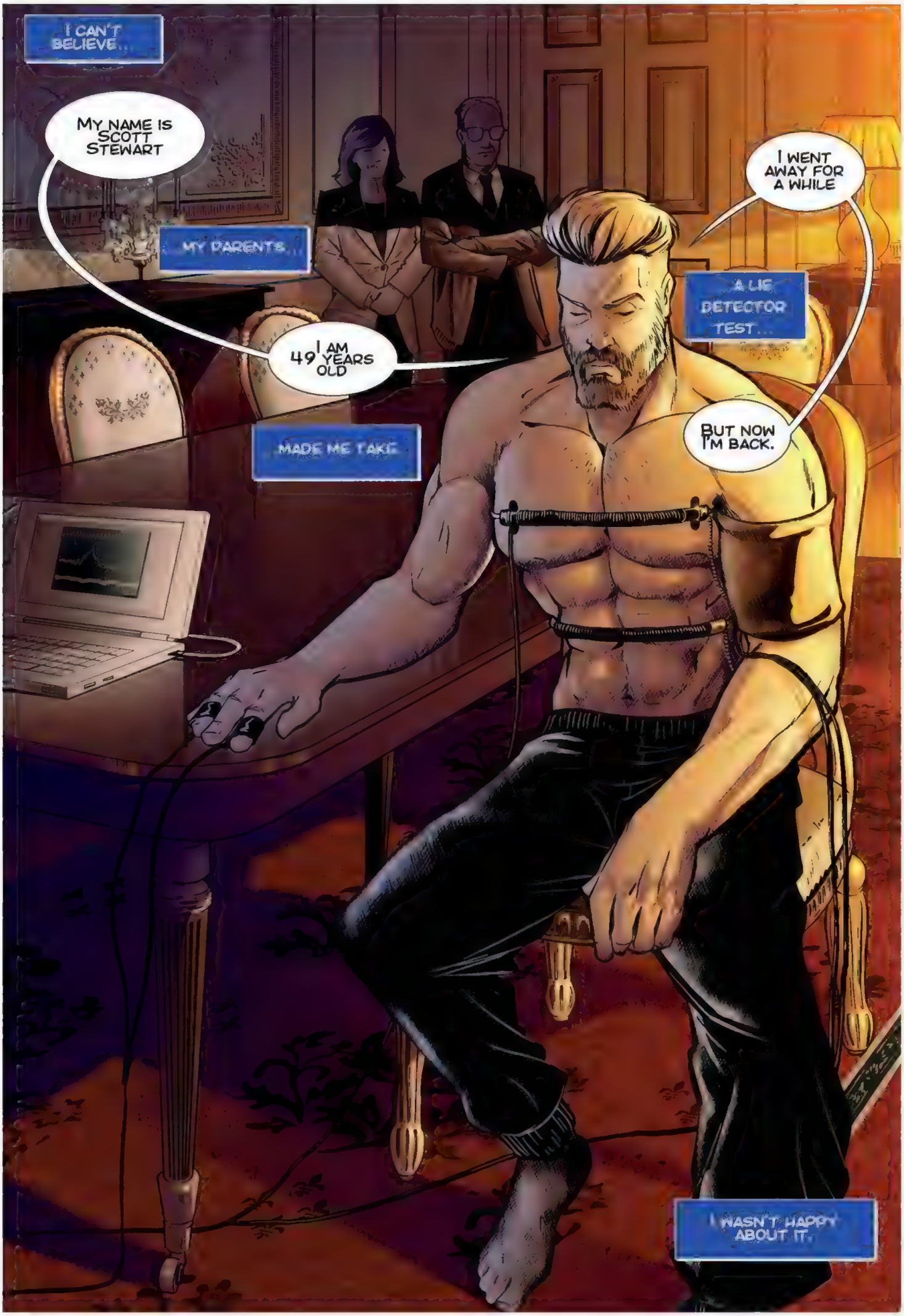
"I hope so Scott," Bruce shouted back, half looking at me, "It's the Year of Young People in 2018. A storm is coming for them, on all fronts, and we need all the help we can get. Thirty years is a long time to not have you on the team. Remember, you were not the only one on Arthur's Seat that day. The Infinity Syndicate told you that. There are others. And Sanctuary is coming."

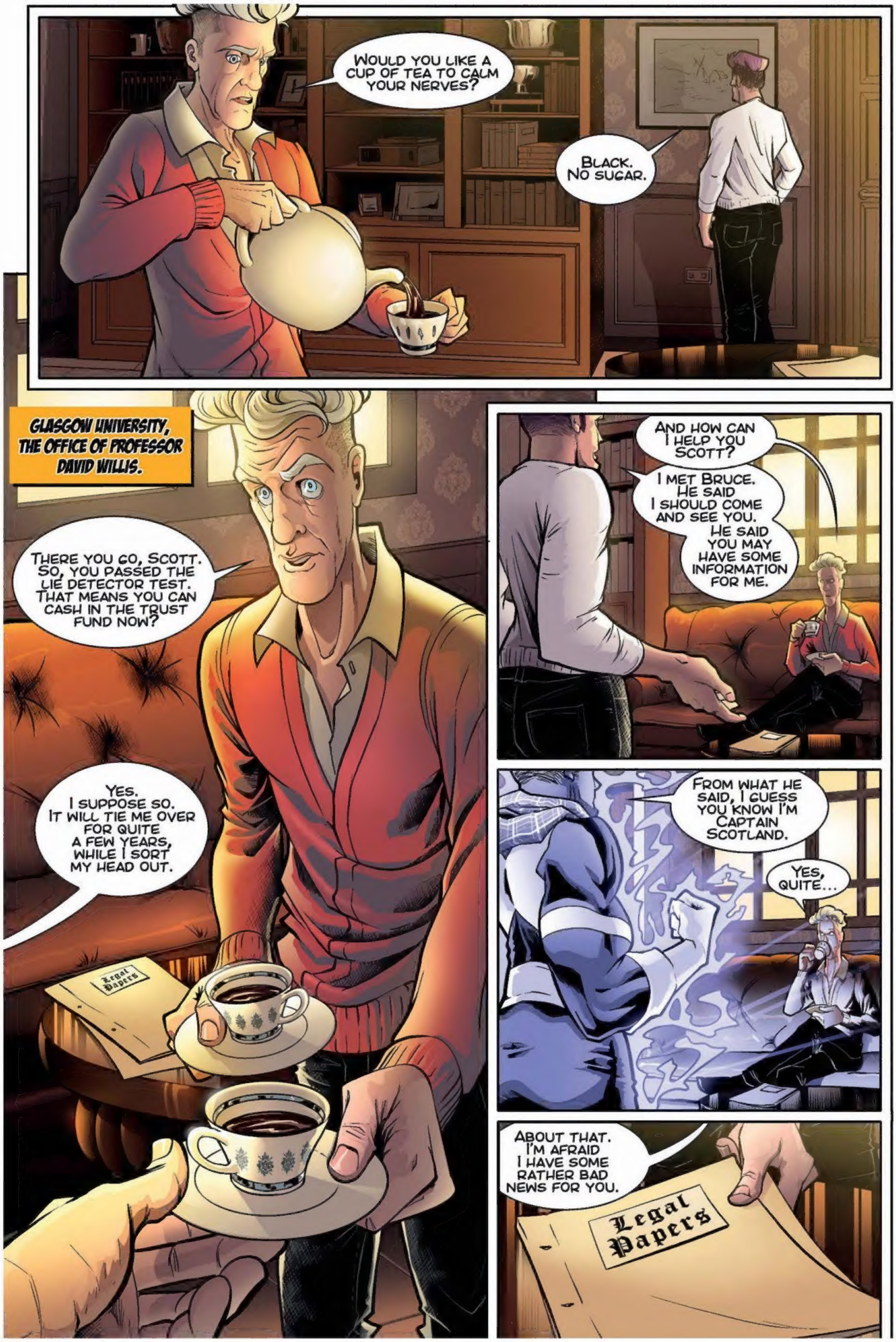
I morphed back into my younger self, taken completely off guard by what Bruce had said.

Suddenly, my back didn't seem covered any more.

To be continued...




I CAN'T BELIEVE...
MY NAME IS SCOTT STEWART
MY PARENTS...
I AM 49 YEARS OLD
...MADE ME TAKE...
I WENT AWAY FOR A WHILE
A LIE DETECTOR TEST...
BUT NOW I'M BACK.
I WASN'T HAPPY ABOUT IT.


WOULD YOU LIKE A CUP OF TEA TO CALM YOUR NERVES?
BLACK. NO SUGAR.
GLASGOW UNIVERSITY, THE OFFICE OF PROFESSOR DAVID WILLIS.
THERE YOU GO, SCOTT. SO, YOU PASSED THE LIE DETECTOR TEST. THAT MEANS YOU CAN CASH IN THE TRUST FUND NOW?
YES. I SUPPOSE SO. IT WILL TIE ME OVER FOR QUITE A FEW YEARS, WHILE I SORT MY HEAD OUT.
Legal Papers
AND HOW CAN I HELP YOU SCOTT?
I MET BRUCE. HE SAID I SHOULD COME AND SEE YOU. HE SAID YOU MAY HAVE SOME INFORMATION FOR ME.
FROM WHAT HE SAID, I GUESS YOU KNOW I'M CAPTAIN SCOTLAND.
YES, QUITE...
ABOUT THAT. I'M AFRAID I HAVE SOME RATHER BAD NEWS FOR YOU.
Legal Papers

THESE ARE LEGAL PAPERS REQUESTING YOU TO CEASE AND DESIST USING THE NAME OR APPEARING AS CAPTAIN SCOTLAND, WITH A FURTHER NON DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT ABOUT NOT DISCUSSING THIS ISSUE WITH ANYONE ELSE.
WHAT...I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
...I...I...DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
THIS ISN'T WHAT I EXPECTED. WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
WE WILL, OF COURSE, DIRECT YOUR TALENTS ELSEWHERE - FOR WHICH YOU WILL BE HANDSOMELY COMPENSATED.
I WILL NEED YOU TO SIGN THESE, IN BLUE INK. I HAVE A PEN.
YOU MAY RECALL THERE WERE A NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH YOU ON ARTHUR'S SEAT WHEN YOU DEVELOPED YOUR POWERS.
AS YOU KNOW THOSE POWERS CHANNELLED THROUGH YOU FROM THE EARTHS CORE.
THE LIGHTNING WAS FOR, AH, DRAMATIC EFFECT.
THOSE WITH YOU, PARTAKING IN THE MAY DAY HONOURED TRADITIONS, WERE SIMILARLY AFFECTED.
BUT NOT IN THE DIRECT WAY YOU WERE. MORE TEA?
NO. I. NO, I'M FINE.
THEIR CHILDREN, YOU SEE. THEIR CHILDREN DEVELOPED POWERS. NOT ALL AS WELL ROUNDED AS YOUR OWN, BUT POWERS ALL THE SAME.
I'VE BEEN RESEARCHING THIS FOR A WHILE. THE BODILY INCUBATION OF THE HOST PARENTS WAS ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS. THOSE WHO HAD CHILDREN IN THEIR MID THIRTIES.
WELL, ALL OF THEM HAVE CHILDREN WITH POWERS THAT DEVELOPED IN THEIR TEENS.
I'VE BEEN NURTURING THEM, BUT ALL ARE EAGER AND READY TO LEARN FROM YOU SCOTT.
HOWEVER, ONE OF THEM DEVELOPED MORE THAN EXPECTED.
WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU WOULD BE COMING BACK SCOTT AND, WELL, THERE WAS A VACANCY.
THEY WERE VERY ADAMANT ON CONTRACTS REGARDING HER IMAGE FOR MERCHANDISING.
I'M SO SORRY TO BREAK THE NEWS TO YOU, BUT IT'S ALREADY BEEN DECIDED...

PLEASE MEET THE NEW CAPTAIN SCOTLAND...
ALRIGHT, OLD MAN...

CAPTAIN SCOTLAND